

come together as one community to meet our challenges.

Our Nation's leaders understood this a quarter-century ago when they launched the modern era of environmental protection with the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA's authors understood that environmental protection, economic opportunity, and social responsibility are interrelated. NEPA determined that the Federal Government should work in concert with State and local governments and citizens "to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans."

We've made great progress in 25 years as we've sought to live up to that challenge. As we look forward to the next 25 years of environmental progress, we do so with a renewed determination. Maintaining and enhancing our environment, passing on a clean world to future generations, is a sacred obligation of citizenship. We all have an interest in clean air, pure water, safe food, and protected national treasures. Our environment is, literally, our common ground.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 19, 1997.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Budget Rescission

March 19, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report one proposed rescission of budgetary resources, totaling \$10 million.

The proposed rescission affects the Department of Energy.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 19, 1997.

Statement on Signing the Victim Rights Clarification Act of 1997

March 19, 1997

Today I have signed into law H.R. 924, the "Victim Rights Clarification Act of 1997," to ensure that victims of crime and their families will not be prevented from attending a criminal trial in Federal court simply because they intend to exercise their right to give a statement during a sentencing hearing, once guilt has been decided. I commend the Congress for responding to the initiative led by crime victims and their families, and by a bipartisan group of State attorneys general. As I have said before, when someone is a victim, he or she should be at the center of the criminal justice process, not on the outside looking in. The Act, of course, does not limit the courts' authority and obligation to protect the defendant's right to a fair trial under the due process clause.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 19, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 924, approved March 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105-6. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 20.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland in Helsinki

March 20, 1997

President's Visit

Q. Mr. President, what did you think of President Yeltsin's conciliatory remarks on his arrival here?

The President. I was quite encouraged. I felt good about it. I'm looking forward to the meeting. And I thank President Ahtisaari for making it possible for us to be here.

Q. Are you finding—how are you finding a bum knee? Is that compatible with international diplomacy?

The President. So far we're doing all right. My knee and I are getting around pretty well.